



Press Release

Naval Surface Force, Atlantic

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De Wert Returns from Final Deployment

By Fire Controlman 2nd Class Jarrett Meyer, USS De Wert Public Affairs

MAYPORT, Fla. (NNS) -- The guided-missile frigate USS De Wert (FFG 45) returned to Naval Station Mayport after a six-month deployment to the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility, Dec. 23.

De Wert, along with embarked Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 46 Det. 3 “The Hooligans”, played a key role in providing maritime security to the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa regions as part of NATO's counter-piracy Operation OCEAN SHIELD.

The ship augmented fleet operations by conducting Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA) visits to small crafts in the Somali basin, collecting information and building cooperative relationships with the local fishermen.

De Wert operated from the Azores in the North Atlantic Ocean, across the Mediterranean Sea, to the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. The nations of Greece, Italy, Oman, Djibouti and Portugal each hosted the ship. In the course of traveling nearly 16,000 miles, the ship's crew conducted 26 sea and anchor details, five connected replenishments and 10 replenishment-at-sea details. The “Hooligans” conducted 136 sorties and logged 419 flight hours. More than 50 crewmembers qualified as Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialists and four officers earned their Surface Warfare Officer Pins.

After the DeWert returns to Mayport; accompanied by the guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68), its sister ship and companion back from the Gulf of Aden, its crew will take a post-overseas movement (POM) leave period, before returning to prepare the ship for decommissioning.

The ship is slated to be decommissioned in April 2014 after more than 30 years of distinguished service. The ship's crews have participated in the war against terrorism, counter piracy operations, narcotics interdiction, rescue missions and provided humanitarian assistance throughout the world. As an ultimate tribute, the ship has fulfilled ceremonial functions for several burial at sea services.

Cmdr. Joseph Thomas, DeWert's final commanding officer, spoke to the crew. "Take what you learned on FFG 45 and carry it with you the rest of your life into all that you do. Take these words to heart; we are the spirit of DeWert. Even after we say goodbye to her, we will carry the story and times of our frigate 'til the end of our days. We will tell our grandchildren and wives what we did here. Tell them with pride. You were part of the best frigate Mayport has ever known. You can stand a little taller walking around, because you know what you did here. Carry that spirit onwards."

The frigate was commissioned on Nov. 19, 1983. It was named after United States Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Richard David DeWert. Assigned to a Marine fire team that came under enemy fire during the Korean War, DeWert repeatedly rushed onto the battlefield to aid the wounded and to bring them to safety. Wounded himself, he refused treatment. In the course of administering aid to a Marine, he was killed by enemy fire. For his valor and self-sacrifice, DeWert was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1951.

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